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ADDRESS OF THE RETIRING
PRESIDENT, GEN. R. D. MUSSEY,
OF THE GARFIELD GUARD OF
HONOR, NOV. 9, 1885

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OF THE

Retiring President, Gen. R. D. Mussey,

OF THE

GARFIELD GUARD OF HONOR,

November 9, 1885.

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RE-UNION OF THE GARFIELD GUARD OF HONOR.

At the time the remains of President Garfield lay in state in the Rotunda of the Capitol in September, 1881, they were guarded by a number of gentlemen, who during the late war had been connected with the Army, most of them with the Army of the Cumberland, of which Army Gen'l Garfield had been Chief of Staff. There were about 50 of them, divided into 4 "Reliefs," engaged in this duty.

To perpetuate the memory of this service they formed an Organization called "The Garfield Guard of Honor," which has held since then Annual Re-Unions on the 19th of November—Garfield's Birthday.

The Re-Union of 1885 was at the National Hotel in Washington, when 18 sat down at the table; and several more were represented by letters regretting their unavoidable absence.

The following Officers were elected for the ensuing year:

President, GEN'L JOHN C. STARKWEATHER.

Vice President, GEN'L GEO. W. BALLOCH.

Secretary, ALEX. SCOTT.

Treasurer, MAJOR L. P. WILLIAMS.

Historian, M. GARDNER.

Council, { FRED MACK.
CAPT. A. P. LACEY.

The Literary part of the Program at the supper included the address of the retiring President, Gen'l R. D. Mussey, and responses to the following Toasts:

"James A. Garfield:" Col. F. A. Seely.

"Our Vacant Chairs:" Col. E. C. Ford.

"The Memories of the War:" Gen'l G. W. Balloch.

The address of Gen'l Mussey was as follows:

COMRADES :

For the fourth time the Garfield Guard of Honor has met to commemorate its service on those September days in 1881 when yonder Capitol became the mausoleum toward which the whole world turned.

Our common service there was a fitting pendant to our common service in that struggle which held together the Nation in whose Capitol we served. For we, like him whose body lay there, had freely left civil life for arms, and as freely left arms for civil life again, in obedience to changing needs of our common country. As citizens of the Republic we kept our vigil around the casket where lay all earthly that remained of one who, as our fellow citizen and our fellow soldier, had borne a conspicuous part in war and peace, and upon whom promotion had fallen—promotion from the visible, the natural and the temporal, to the invisible, the spiritual and the eternal.

Upon that casket, bedded in choicest flowers, whose fragrant beauty yet failed to express the loving, tender homage of their givers, palms were strewn in token of the race well run, the fight well fought, and the victory surely won.

Whether by day, we aided through that Rotunda, and past that bier, a surging mass where the jewels of the rich rubbed the rags of the poor; where decrepit age guided the faltering steps of infancy; where the delicate and the rough, the millionaire and the laborer, the scholar and the unlearned, jostled against each other; where the black and the white, the blue and the gray, were equals and brothers; or whether, by night, as the doors were closed and the lights of the dome feebly simulated the stars in the greater dome that canopies the earth, we stood silent watchers about the dead—whether with the multitude about us or alone—the hours there passed together were rarely rich in lives not wholly devoid of noteworthy experiences.

To but few has it ever been given, as it was given to us, to be at the very focus to which the rays of an universal grief and a world-wide pity converged; to see, as we saw, the outward demonstrations of a weeping humanity upon the object we

surrounded; and to hear, as we heard, the throbbing of the world's heart.

There have been orders of nobility that had their origin in smaller events than these; and it is proper that we, in whose happy land all are sovereigns, and where nobility is not accidental and hereditary, but, if it exist at all, essential and individual, should, by an annual assembly, keep alive the memories of that occasion.

Of the half hundred then together, but three have joined the majority since our organization, and there have been fewer removals from the city since we last met here than it was then feared there would be, so that our reunion to-night is fuller than was anticipated a year ago.

Of the absent fuller notice will be given when the toasts are reached; though I may say in passing that our Guard has been twice called together during the past year; on the first occasion to attend the funeral on the 23d of December last, of our Comrade Miller, when, owing to the fact that there was no opportunity given for sufficient notification, there were only eight present. The second assembly was last June, when twenty of us met our Comrade Crittenden on the eve of his departure for the Pacific Coast, and bade him good bye and God speed. His heart turns to us to-night, and from his Western home he sends us kindly greeting, shaking hands with us across the continent!

What the year we enter upon has in store for us is mercifully hidden. But, whatever of good or ill may come, let us trust that the spirit of devotion to our country which nearly a quarter of a century ago enrolled us under the flag that floats to-day securer for our service, and the comradeship which that service developed, shall dominate us with increasing potency.

Thus each reunion will be more precious; and if the day ever comes when all the chairs but one are vacant, the sole survivor of the Guard shall fill them with recollections of an abiding friendship that no lapse of time can obliterate.

It is an old fable of the Gothic races that the disembodied spirits of the unburied dead in battle renew at night the con-

test from which their surviving comrades have rested with a fierceness of endeavor unparalleled in the conflicts of the living. A better faith leads us to believe that the dead of those who fought with us and the dead of those who fought against us, now that the gross impediments to true vision are removed, see eye to eye, and know that our final victory was not a mere personal one, in which man triumphed over man, and superior force prevailed, but a veritable victory of ideas to which the vanquished by their defeat itself contributed; and that they, even more heartily than their survivors, accept with gratitude the result.

No utterance—nay! we cannot call it an utterance, for it was the penciled memorandum of a speechless man—of all those which came from the sufferer on Mt. McGregor, is so pathetic as that which expressed his thankfulness that his “time had been “extended” because “it has enabled me”—to use his own words—“to see for myself the happy harmony which has so “suddenly sprung up between those engaged but a few short “years ago in deadly conflict. It has been an inestimable “blessing to me to hear the kind expressions towards me in “person from all parts of our country; from people of all na-
“tionalities; of all religions and of no religion; of Confed-
“erate and National troops alike; of soldiers’ organizations; “of mechanical, scientific, religious, and all other societies, “embracing every citizen in the land. They have brought “joy to my heart, if they have not effected a cure.”

As with tearful eyes we read these words, we cannot but wonder if their writer was conscious that they were penned four years to a day after Garfield was shot—July the 2d. We cannot but ask whether there was recollection of the sympathy that then flowed from every human heart upon the sufferers by that fatal shot. He must have *felt*, if he did not consciously recall, that unexampled outburst of all that was tender, and loving, and pitying in humanity from the nation, not only, but the world, whereof he was part, and whereto he contributed. For among the group that heard the funeral services of Garfield in the Capitol there was no figure so conspicuous, in the

eyes of our Guard at least, as that modest, retiring, shrinking man who had held the highest rank our armies could confer, had commanded more men than any general of modern days, had been twice elected to the Presidency, and who, as a private American citizen, had made a triumphal journey around the globe, receiving honors never before given to any one man.

It is not a mere fancy that links these men's lives together in our thoughts to-night. For their lines lay often close together in the web and woof of events which Providence have woven into the History of our times. Supporting, crossing, supplementing each other, by turn, they run through all the pattern. Dissimilar in fibre, contrasted in tint, there is yet much in common to them.

Both were born poor, in pretty much all that word implies; yet each was enriched—Garfield from his mother, Grant from his father—with a certain force of character and individuality that more than compensated for poverty. To each was given a physical constitution of marked strength, and a large capacity for labor.

It was from a friend of his father's that Grant went to West Point; his mother's influence confirmed Garfield in his determination to go to college. Grant was trained to action; Garfield to speech. The latter became as proverbially fluent as the former became proverbially reticent. Grant commanded men; Garfield persuaded them. Grant was the actor; Garfield the orator. Were it a horse or a regiment the former mastered it; were it a dead tongue, or a science, the latter acquired it.

Fierce, indomitable, insatiable in his thirst to know, Garfield could never rest; Grant never lost a night's sleep from brooding over fate, or in anticipation of possible disaster. Garfield was introspective; and, like all introspective men, somewhat distrustful of himself. Grant studied others only; of himself he was assured. Equal to all demands theretofore put upon him, he feared no future emergency. He was dogmatic; when he had settled a question, so far as he was concerned, the discussion was ended. Garfield would rehear; he might have erred; this might not have been known to him, and that

might have been misrepresented. Grant's confidence, once gained, it required a cataclysm to unsettle it; once abused, there was no forgiveness. Garfield adhered less firmly to his assurance of others; and when faith was broken with him was always ready to welcome back the repentant wrong-doer. Garfield was born a scholar; Grant a soldier. Garfield's weaknesses as a soldier sprang from the very qualities that made him eminent as a civilian; Grant's weaknesses as a civilian from those that made him eminent as a soldier. Each was earnest in his convictions, though Grant followed his without remorse or hesitation or consideration for others; while Garfield shrank from wounding the feelings of those who differed with him, and if he drew his sword, toyed with the scabbard from a reluctance to give pain that the unthanking attributed to a lack of courage. Garfield advised; Grant commanded. Garfield legislated; Grant executed. The greatest renown of each was won in his appropriate field. Grant's civil achievements, meritorious and noble though many of them be, would have been open to many others; Garfield's military successes alone would not have singled him out for pre-eminence among his fellows. But his twenty years in Congress marked him a leader there, where a century has produced no more leaders than you may count upon your fingers. Grant's Army career marked him the leader of a score of leaders in the field.

To each there came unexampled triumph. The farmer-lad and the tow-path boy by different roads advanced to the Presidency. Grant was the general of the Army of the United States when nominated to be the Chief Executive of the nation; Garfield was the leader of the House of Representatives and a Senator-elect when his name led the balloting at Chicago. For no others had such honor on such honors' heads accumulated.

Plato names it as one of the fated infelicities that attend great success that he who attains it has not himself the use of it; that "the general, when he takes a city or a camp, hands over "his new acquisition to the statesman, for he does not know "how to use them himself." But both to Garfield and to Grant was it given to participate actively in the armed recapture of

a stolen empire, and then to the one to legislate for its reconstruction, and to both to become its Chief Magistrate by popular choice. For, unlike almost every other soldier the world has known, the American soldier of the last war tore down only to rebuild. In their allotted tasks after the war, Grant and Garfield co-operated; wisely in the main, with errors to be sure, which, as incident to human imperfection of judgment, we have long since condoned because of the pure patriotism in which they originated. Garfield was earnest and able in his support of Grant when Grant was the nominee of his party for the Presidency; and Grant, by his Warren speech, did more to elect Garfield than all the other campaign orators combined. For, though Grant was a man of action, whose silence was golden when to be silent was the highest duty, he coined pure silver into speech when speech was needed. Just as Garfield, orator though he was, was capable of sharp and decisive action—as his antagonists often learned to their sorrow.

It would seem as if the Army rolls of the last war were not to furnish our future Presidents. If such be the case, may we not point to the three they have furnished—Hayes and Grant, and Garfield, at whose bier we saw the other two—as types of the American citizen of 1861?

Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free;
Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms;
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.

Through this past summer have we not lived over the summer of 1881? Has not history repeated itself to us? Was not Grant as surely assassinated as Garfield? By what irony of fate was it that Garfield was stricken through the body and Grant through the spirit? Did we not know from the outset that each blow was fatal? Yet while hope was hopeless and mercy would have prayed for immediate surcease of suffering, these, our comrades, rose superior to pain and wrested from the agonies of a lingering death the precious gift of an heroic example for us who remain—and for that matter, for all the world, for all time.

Garfield, the man of speech, resting his dying eyes on the

ever-changing yet ever-constant sea whose voice is never stilled; Grant, the man of action, betaking himself as the final scene approached, to the mountain whose ribbed fastness and grim silence were all his own; looking the one upon the all-embracing ocean of truth whose disciple he had been; the other sublime in his elevation above the surrounding level of groveling greed and selfish seeking, filled with a charity which embraced all—these two, comrades, henceforth shall have audience of the ages!

As Ruskin says: "Men cannot benefit those that are with them as they can benefit those that come after them; and of all pulpits from which human voice is ever sent forth, there is none from which it reaches as far as from the grave."

From the pulpits of their graves what sermons shall be spoken of patriotism, of courage, of patience, of endurance, of obedience, of leadership, of struggle, of achievement, of fraternity, of—in one word—the summary of all that is noble in aspiration and great in achievement—of American citizenship!

Indeed, at times it seems best that their graves should not be here in Washington; that the one should be beside that lake which fascinated the boy, a land mark for the mariner of the interior, and a monument and guide for the emigrant as he follows the sun to its Western setting, proclaiming with the captivating eloquence of example, the possibilities of our national life; while the other in that congeries of foreign cities called New York, like a beacon warns from off the shoals that surround the money maker; pointing the moral, that the only real wealth is in character; and that there is no higher or more glorious fame than to have served our fellow man.

"*Pulchrum est bene facere rei publicae; etiam bene dicere haud adsurdum est; vel pace vel bello clarum fieri licet.*"

These men, each of them, both by act and by speech, served the Republic; and each was illustrious in peace and in war.

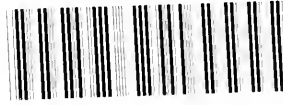
"Taps" over their bodies if you will; "taps" at their graves if you will, for the death they have conquered; but for *them* "the Reveille;" for upon them has risen the sun of an endless day!

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